

Message Text

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64

ACTION NEA-10

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-10 OMB-01 SAB-01 SAM-01 MC-02 IGA-02

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 493

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IS, US, EG

SUBJECT: ISRAELI MEDIA ON U.S. ARMS SALES TO EGYPT

REF: TEL AVIV 1647

BEGIN SUMMARY: MAJOR TOPIC OF ISRAELI MEDIA TODAY IS WASHINGTON REPORTS OF CONTRADICTIONARY STATEMENTS BY DEFENSE SECRETARY RUMSFELD, SECRETARY KISSINGER, AND SICO REGARDING U.S. ARMS SALES TO EGYPT. PRESS ALSO GIVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO RABIN'S PUBLIC CRITICISM OF PROPOSED SALES. END SUMMARY

1. ISRAELI PRESS GIVES FRONTPAGE COVERAGE TO WASHINGTON-BASED REPORTS REGARDING SALES OF AMERICAN ARMS TO EGYPT.

JERUSALEM POST (BLITZER) AND OTHER NEWSPAPER QUOTE U.S. DEFENSE SECRETARY RUMSFELD AS SAYING IN A NEWS CONFERENCE THAT HE EXPECTS WEAPONS TO BECOME PART OF U.S. RELATIONS WITH THE EGYPTIANS. RUMSFELD SAID THAT HE WOULD BE SURPRISED "IF IT WAS LIMITED TO C-130S...I WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED TO SEE A RIFLE, OR OTHER THINGS THAT WOULD LOGICALLY BECOME

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PART OF SUCH RELATIONSHIP..." RUMSFELD CALLED AMERICAN

SALE OF ARMS TO EGYPT "A HEALTHY THING" FOR BOTH THE U.S.
AND THE MIDDLE EAST.

2. AT THE SAME TIME, ACCORDING TO ISRAELI PRESS REPORTS,
SECRETARY KISSINGER TOLD HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES INTER-
NATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE THAT THE U.S. SHOULD SELL
SIX C-130 TRANSPORT PLANES TO EGYPT AS A SYMBOL OF SUPPORT
FOR PRESIDENT SADAT BUT THAT HE (KISSINGER) DOES NOT
ANTICIPATE ANY ARMS SALES IN THE "NEXT FEW MONTHS..."
KISSINGER IS ALSO REPORTED TO HAVE TOLD THE COMMITTEE THAT
THE U.S. "CANNOT BE THE PRINCIPAL ARMS SUPPLIER TO EGYPT.."
HE ADDED THAT THE EGYPTIAN MOVEMENT AWAY FROM DEPENDENCE ON
THE SOVIETS FOR SUPPLIES "WAS A COURAGEOUS DECISION ON THE
PART OF SADAT." THE U.S., KISSINGER DECLARED, MUST DO WHAT
IS IN ITS--NOT ISRAEL'S--BEST NATIONAL INTEREST, AND THE
DECISION TO
SELL THE PLANES TO EGYPT WAS MADE ACCORDINGLY.

3. PRESS AND RADIO ALSO NOTE "SEEMINGLY CONTRADICTIONARY
INFORMATION" GIVEN TO AMBASSADOR DINITZ BY KISSINGER AND
SISCO. JERUSALEM POST (BLITZER) WRITES THAT "INFORMED
SOURCES HERE SAID THAT KISSINGER INFORMED DINITZ DURING A
TELEPHONE CONVERSATION YESTERDAY MORNING THAT THE ADMINISTRATION
WAS CONSIDERING ONLY THE SALE OF THE SIX C-130S...
TO EGYPT. KISSINGER TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT THE
ADMINISTRATION WAS NOT CURRENTLY CONSIDERING OTHER ARMS
SALES TO EGYPT. BUT SISCO...TOLD DINITZ DURING A MEETING
ON MONDAY THAT THE C-130 DEAL WITH EGYPT WAS ONLY THE
START OF MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP THAT WOULD LATER
INCLUDE OTHER ITEMS, INCLUDING TRANSPORT HELICOPTERS,
MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAMS, RADIO EQUIPMENT AND MINE
DETECTORS..."

4. PRESS ADDS THAT IN A MEETING BETWEEN KISSINGER AND
DINITZ, SCHEDULED FOR TODAY (MARCH 5), THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR
WILL EXPRESS ISRAEL'S PROTEST AT DECISION TO SELL AMERICAN
ARMS TO EGYPT AND SEEK CLARIFICATIONS ON THE INFORMATION
GIVEN TO ISRAEL BY THE SECRETARY AND SISCO. JERUSALEM POST
(BLITZER) ADDS THAT ACCORDING TO SOME OBSERVERS IN WASHINGTON
"KISSINGER WAS ONCE AGAIN TRYING TO 'MISLEAD' ISRAEL..."
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KISSINGER WAS ONLY TRYING TO SHOW ISRAEL...THAT HE WAS ON
THE SIDE OF THE JEWISH STATE, WHEN IN FACT THIS WAS ACTUALLY
A PLOY. OTHER SOURCES, SYMPATHETIC TO KISSINGER, SAID THE
SECRETARY WAS GENUINELY OPPOSED TO THE START OF A MILITARY
SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH EGYPT AT THIS TIME, CONVINCED THAT
IT WOULD SERIOUSLY STRAIN U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONS AND DAMAGE
THE ADMINISTRATION'S POPULARITY IN THE CONGRESS. KISSINGER
WAS BEING OVERRULED BY THE PRESIDENT..."

5. ALL NEWSPAPERS HIGHLIGHT PRIME MINISTER RABIN'S REMARKS
ON SUPPLY OF AMERICAN ARMS TO EGYPT NOTING THAT THE U.S.
WILL BECOME A MOVING FORCE IN ACCELERATING THE MIDDLE
EAST ARMS RACE IF IT SUPPLIES ARMS TO EGYPT (SEE REFTEL).
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